

**Abstract of the Disclosure**

Codes, such as those representing dates (324), barcodes (326) and incrementing values (325) are applied onto packaged consumer products by a coder (410). The coder receives instructions from a processing system (406) composite data (405) representing information to be coded onto the packaging is received by the processing system (406). Coder instructions for a coder processing subsystem (411) are generated by processing system (406) with reference to coder capabilities (409). In response to these coder capabilities, the processing system (406) either instructs the coder to generate a graphical representation in response to said instructions or assists the coder to generate a graphical representation before supplying lower level instructions to the coder.

(Figure 4)